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Language, Religious. See ANALOGY, PRINCIPLE OF ; LOGICAL POSITIVISM ; WITTGENSTEIN, LUDWIG .

Lapide, Pinchas. Pinchas Lapide is a late-twentieth-century Jewish rabbi and biblical scholar who, without converting to Christianity, supports the Christian belief that Jesus of Nazareth rose bodily from the grave. His conclusion supports a crucial link in the Christian apologetic—that of Christ’s resurrection.

In his book, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, Rabbi Lapide concluded: “In regard to the future resurrection of the dead, I am and remain a Pharisee. Concerning the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday, I was for decades a Sadducee. I am no longer a Sadducee since the following deliberation has caused me to think this through anew” (125). He adds, “If God’s power which was active in Elisha is great enough to resuscitate even a dead person who was thrown into the tomb of the prophet (2 Kings 13:20–21), then the bodily resurrection of a crucified Jew also would not be inconceivable” (131).

Since a miracle is an act of God that confirms the truth of a prophet of God (see MIRACLES, APOLOGETIC VALUE OF), it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Jesus is the Messiah (see CHRIST, DEITY OF). As one writer put it, “Pinchas Lapide’s logic escapes me. He believes it is a possibility that Jesus was resurrected by God. At the same time he does not accept Jesus as the Messiah. But Jesus said that he was the Messiah. Why would God resurrect a liar?” (*Time* , 4 June 1979). Indeed, another rabbi said to Jesus, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him” (John 3:2).

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Law, Nature and Kinds of. Moral law is a measure for conduct. It is a first principle (see FIRST PRINCIPLES) of human action. After it is proclaimed, a law is binding. Theonomists contend that the only legitimate law is divine law, insisting that human governments should be based on

biblical law (Bahnsen). Situation ethicists insist that there are no moral absolutes, and all law reduces to human law. Moralists ponder the relation of divine law and human law. One of the most comprehensive and influential treatments of the topic is that of Thomas Aquinas. Secular, Protestant, and Catholic scholars, including John Calvin , John Locke , and Thomas Jefferson through the legal theorist William Blackstone, built on his analysis.

The Nature of Law. Law is a measure or rule by which we are led to act or are withheld from acting. Law is a first principle of action. It is the basic rule or principle by which actions of persons are directed. The rule and measure of human activity is reason, whose function is to direct means to ends (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a2ae. 90, 1). Civil law is an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by public person(s) who have charge of the community. It is promulgated to them (ibid., 1a2ae. 90, 4).

Law as First Principle. Each area of human activity has first principles. There are first principles of human thinking, such as the law of noncontradiction. Likewise, there are first principles of being, such as the principle that “Being exists.” And there are first principles of human acting, such as, “Do good and shun evil.” The latter is known as the natural law. The precepts of the natural law are to practical reason what first principles of thought are to philosophical thinking. The first principle of practical reason is our ultimate end or happiness. Law is primarily concerned with planning for this end. In brief, law is the rule directed toward the common good (happiness) (ibid., 1a2ae. 90, 2).

Proclamation of Law. For law to be in effect, it must be proclaimed. No one is obliged to obey a precept without first being reasonably informed of it (Aquinas, *Disputations*). This follows logically upon the nature of law as a duty of action for the common good. Thus, to lay down an obligation a law must be applied to the persons to be regulated, and it must be brought to their knowledge by promulgation (*Summa Theologica*, 1a2ae. 90, 4). Ignorance of the law is a legitimate excuse not to obey it, unless it is culpable ignorance.

Different Kinds of Law. Four kinds of law have been differentiated: eternal, natural, human, and divine. Each is the measure or rule in a different sphere.

Eternal Law. *Eternal law* is the idea in the mind of God, the principle of the universe that lies behind the governance of all things (ibid., 1a2ae. 91, 1). It is the source and exemplar of all other law. For all laws derive from the eternal law to the extent that they share in right reason. It is eternal because, being in the mind of God, it is the plan of things that was set up from eternity (ibid.). So eternal law is the divine reason by which the universe is ruled. All things subject to divine providence are ruled and measured by eternal law; thus they share in eternal law (ibid., 1a2ae. 91, 2). It is the eternal mind of God as it conceived and determined all that would be and how it would be run. From it flow other kinds of law.

Natural Law . The communication of eternal law to rational creatures is called *natural law* . Natural law is the human participation in eternal law by way of reason. It is contained in the eternal law primarily and in the natural judicial faculty of human reason secondarily (ibid., 1a2ae. 71, 6). Natural law is the light of reason by which we discern what is right and wrong (ibid., 1a2ae. 91, 2). It is the law written on human hearts (Rom. 2:15).

Natural law teaches us to do good and shun evil. Good and evil should be set in the context of what is proper to human beings as human, their rational and moral life (*Disputations*, 2). So a good act is one in accord with human rational and moral nature. An evil act is one contrary to human nature. Sadly, most people err at this point because they act according to sense rather than reason (*Summa Theologica*, 1a. 49, 3).

However, to live according to human nature does not mean that human nature is the ultimate measure. In voluntary activity the proximate measure is human reason, but the supreme measure is eternal law (ibid., 1a2ae. 71, 6). When a human act goes to its end in harmony with the order of reason and eternal law, the act is right; when it turns away from that rightness it is wrong (ibid., 1a2ae. 21, 1). Human reason is the basis for natural law only insofar as it participates in God's eternal reason. In this sense, violating the dictate of reason amounts to violating the law of God (ibid., 1a2ae. 19, 5).

Human Law. *Human law* , also called positive or civil law, is the attempt of human reason to make practical laws based on natural law. Human law results when the practical reason proceeds to enact concrete laws for society from the general precepts of the natural law (ibid., 1a2ae. 91, 3). It is a particularization of the general principles of natural law.

Human laws may be inferred from natural law. Some precepts are inferred from natural law as a conclusion. For example, "You should not kill" comes from "You should not harm." Other precepts are determinate embodiments of the natural law. Natural law dictates that criminals should be punished, but it does not (always) settle the character of that punishment (ibid., 1a2ae. 95, 2). Human laws may be derived from natural law, either as a conclusion or a particular application (ibid.). The first is like a demonstrative science and the second like an art. Hence, laws declared as conclusions have their force from both the natural law and the government that enacts them. Applied laws have their force from government alone.

Not everything forbidden by human law is essentially evil. Some things are commanded as good, or forbidden as evil. Others are good because they are commanded or evil because they are forbidden (ibid., 2a2ae. 57, 2). An act of vice, forbidden by a negative precept, is never to be committed. However, many factors have to conspire to make a commanded act of virtue right. A virtuous act need not be complied with in every case, "but only when the due conditions of person, time, place, and situation demand its observance" (see Gilby, 361).

Human law is imposed on imperfect people. "Therefore it does not forbid all vices, from which the virtuous keep themselves, but only the graver ones, which the majority can avoid, and chiefly those that are damaging to others and on prevention of which depends social stability" (*Summa Theologica*, 1a2ae. 96, 2). That is, "human law cannot forbid all and everything that is against virtue; it is enough that it forbid deeds against community life; the remainder it tolerates almost as if they were licit, not indeed because they are approved, but because they are not punished" (ibid., 2a2ae. 77, 1). "Every act of virtue is not commanded by human law, but only those that can be enjoined for the public good" (ibid., 2a2ae. 96, 3). For "the immediate end of human law is men's own utility" (ibid., 1a2ae. 95, 3).

Of course, not every human law is legitimate. A law has the force of law only when it benefits the community (ibid., 2ae. 90, 2). Laws contrary to common good (which is demanded by the natural law) do not have the force of law. Likewise, laws not promulgated, even if directed to the common good, are not binding (*Disputations*, 177).

Divine Law. *Divine law* has a different purpose from natural law. Its intent is to lead people to God. That is, "the entire purpose of the lawgiver is that man may love God" (Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 111–16). Divine law, therefore, is not given to unbelievers but to believers. Natural law is for unbelievers. Divine law is binding on the church, but natural law is binding on all society. Natural law is directed toward temporal good, but divine law is directed toward eternal good. Inasmuch as natural law reflects the very character of God, it cannot change. Divine law, however, is based on God's will and therefore does change. Hence, "in divine as in human law, some things are commanded because they are good. . . . Others again are good because they are commanded . . ." (*Summa Theologica*, 2a2ae. 57, 2). This is reflected in God's change in divine law from the Old Testament to the New Testament. The natural law remains the same from age to age and from person to person.

Purpose of Law. In general, God's purpose for law is to regulate human activity. Each kind of law, of course, has its own kind of regulation in mind. By eternal law God regulates the entire universe; by divine law he regulates the church, and by natural law he regulates all rational creatures. In addition to these spheres, Aquinas spells out several specific dimensions of God's purpose for giving law.

Friendship. One purpose of law is to promote friendship. "As the leading purpose of human law is to bring about friendship of men among themselves, so divine law is chiefly intended to establish men in friendship with God" (ibid., 2a2ae. 99, 2). To be civil, behavior must be regulated. Apart from laws, friendship cannot function, since it is the measure of right relationships.

Love of God. Jesus summarized all laws into two: Love God and love others. Aquinas calls love for God the "entire purpose of the lawgiver." Hence, it is not *either* law *or* love; it is the law of love. It leads humanity to God. For "love is our strongest union with God, and this above all is intended by the divine law." God is love, and the highest duty is to love him (*Summa contra Gentiles*, 111–16).

Curbing Evil. Not everyone will obey God's law, so sanctions are required, either to reform the sinner or to protect society through his punishment (*Summa Theologica*, 2a2ae. 68, 1). This is also true of divine and natural law. The primary purpose is for our good, but the secondary purpose is to penalize those who disobey.

Common Good. Human laws also have the purpose of achieving the common good. Aquinas recognized that "to make a rule fit every case is impossible." Hence, "legislators have to attend to what happens in the majority of cases and should frame their laws accordingly." For example, the law commands that things borrowed should be returned. What if a weapon has been borrowed and, if given back, it will be used for violence (ibid., 2a2ae. 120, 1)? So what is productive of the common good is not always right in a specific case. Since the law-maker

cannot take every specific exception into consideration, law must be based on what usually happens (Aquinas, *Commentary, 5 Ethics*, lect. 16).

Conflicting Laws. Sometimes there is conflict among kinds of law. In such cases there is a hierarchy of priority.

Priority of Natural Law. There are exceptions even to just human laws. Human laws are only general, not universal. At times natural law overrides them. Though the law of property rights demands that we return what we have borrowed when requested, nonetheless, we should not return a weapon to someone who is in a murderous rage. In such a case, “to follow the law as it stands would be wrong; to leave it aside and follow what is demanded by fairness and the common benefit will then be right” (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, 2a2ae. 120, 1*). The virtue of justice or equity demands this. Moral law takes precedence over human law in special cases, even if the human law is just.

Law’s Based in God’s Nature. Divine and human law, being based on God’s will, can be changed (*see* ESSENTIALISM). The natural law, however, is based on God’s nature and cannot be changed (*Summa Theologica, 2a2ae. 57, 2; see* GOD, NATURE OF). Hence, it would follow that, whenever there is a conflict between unchangeable law and changeable law, the former takes priority. When the disciples picked ears of corn on the Sabbath they were excused by necessity of hunger. Neither did David transgress by taking the loaves it was illegal for him to eat (*ibid., 3a. 90, 4*).

Letter vs. Spirit. Christian thinkers have noted that “the judgment that the letter of the law is not to be followed in certain given circumstances is not a criticism of the law, but an appreciation of a particular situation that has cropped up” (*ibid., 2a2ae. 120, 1*). If one does not do this, then severity takes priority over equity. For “legal-mindedness should be directed by equity, which provides a higher rule for human activity” (*ibid., 2a2ae. 120, 2*). There is a higher law and lower laws. When they conflict, one is obligated to obey the higher.

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Leibniz, Gottfried. Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716) was a child genius in Germany who learned both Greek and scholastic philosophy at an age so young he was denied a master’s degree in law at the University of Leipzig because of his youth. He co-invented calculus with Isaac Newton in 1676. He wrote a doctoral dissertation on symbolic solutions to philosophical problems. Leibniz was greatly influenced by contemporary rationalist Benedict Spinoza , although Spinoza was a pantheist (*see* PANTHEISM), and Leibniz remained a theist (*see* THEISM).

The most influential works of Leibniz were *Discourse on Metaphysics* , *Monadology* , and *Theodicy* . His influence on modern thought has been considerable. Immanuel Kant was a Leibnizian rationalist before he was awakened from his “dogmatic slumbers” by reading David Hume .

Theory of Knowledge: Rationalism. Leibniz stated three goals for his life work, which he believed stood together, the love of God, promotion of human welfare, and the perfection of reason. The Leibniz method was mathematical, yet empirically grounded. He began by analyzing scientific findings (not merely ideas, as René Descartes). He saw everything as beginning in the senses except the mind itself. A purely logical ground for science is not possible. However, reason is necessary to complete knowledge. There is no universal collection of sense data, and sense cannot organize and relate all the data.

Metaphysical (universal) knowledge is possible only because God made all things in harmony. All ideas are innate, generated by the mind from sensory information.

First Principles. Some ideas are necessarily true. These first principles are the condition of all knowledge. As first principles, the predicate in each statement can be deduced from the subject. These include:

The Principle of Sufficient Reason . “There is a sufficient reason for everything, either in another or in itself.” This principle is the ground of all true propositions and intelligibility.

The Principle of Noncontradiction. “Something cannot be both true and false at the same time and in the same sense.”

The Principle of Identity. “A thing is identical to itself.” I am I; A is A.

The principle of sufficient reason regulates all truth. The principles of noncontradiction and identity establish all necessary truths.

The Principle of Identity of Indiscernibles. “Where there is no discernible difference, things are identical.” No separate substances (or monads) are alike. The world is filled with qualitatively different things, hierarchically graded. If two things were the same, there is no sufficient reason God would choose both of them to exist in a maximally good world (see EVIL, PROBLEM OF).

The Principle of Continuity. “The world is full; there are no gaps in the hierarchy of beings in the best world.” Nature never acts by leaps.

The Principle of Contingency. “Every contingent thing has a cause.” Possibility does not explain actuality. The basic question: Why is there something, rather than nothing?

The Principle of Perfection. “ Good tends to maximize.” Like the scholastic principle of finality (agents act for a good end). Good produces good in the maximal degree possible.

A corollary is that it is better to exist than not to exist. Essences have a drive (*conatus*) toward existence.

Leibniz’s Proofs for God. Leibniz offered several arguments for the existence of God:

Argument from Perfection or Harmony. His argument from perfection or harmony can be stated:

1. Pure essences are eternal possibilities.
2. It is better to exist than not to exist.
3. All things have a drive toward existence (*conatus*). (a) Some are incompatible with others. (b) Not all can exist at a given moment. (c) But all strive to exist.
4. Yet there is harmony in the universe.
5. Hence, there must be a God who orders all things, keeping them in harmony with one another

Cosmological Argument. The cosmological argument as formulated by Leibniz took the form:

1. The entire observed world is changing.
2. Whatever changes lacks the reason for its own existence.
3. But there is a sufficient reason for everything.
4. Hence, there must be a cause beyond the world for its existence.

5. This cause is either its own sufficient reason, or there is one beyond it.
6. But there cannot be an infinite regress of sufficient reasons, for the failure to reach an explanation is not an explanation. There must be an explanation.
7. Therefore, there must be a First Cause of the world that has no reason beyond itself but is its own sufficient reason.

This argument differs from that of Aquinas by its use of the principle of sufficient reason. Thomas Aquinas appealed only to the principle of causality and, thus, avoided the charges of rationalism that were rightly leveled at Leibniz. The principle of sufficient reason led atheists (see SARTRE, JEAN-PAUL ; Nietzsche, Friedrich) to conclude that the cosmological argument eventuated in the self-contradictory concept of God as a self-caused being.

Ontological Argument . Leibniz also contributed to the ontological argument debate:

1. If it is possible for an absolutely perfect being to exist, then it is necessary for it to exist. (a) By nature an absolutely perfect being cannot lack anything. (b) But if it did not exist, it would lack something. (c) Hence, an absolutely perfect being cannot lack existence.
2. It is possible (noncontradictory) for an absolutely perfect being to exist. (a) A perfection is a simple quality (= monad), since each one differs in kind. (b) But whatever is simple cannot conflict with another simple thing. (c) Hence, it is possible for one being (God) to have all perfections.
3. Therefore, it is necessary that an absolutely perfect being exists.

Metaphysics (Monadology). Leibniz developed his own theory of substance in order to bridge the physical world to metaphysical realities. His doctrine revolved around *monads* . He believed monads exist as an immaterial “particle” more elemental even than the atom, for while physical atoms can be divided, metaphysical monads cannot. Monads differ from one another in shape, size, space, and quality. They are created, they can be destroyed, but they cannot change. Each monad perceives and acts differently, at its own hierarchical level, as established by God. Together they act in total harmony with each other according to the plan of God and have an innate drive toward perfection that is built into their essence. Since body and soul are separate substances, their separate monads function together in precise harmony as ordered by God.

In the hierarchy of monads, the higher are those belonging to the spiritual realm. Soul monads are of a higher order than those of the body. The highest, uncreated Super Monad is God. God created all other monads and maximizes good among and through them.

Problem of Evil. According to Leibniz, God foreordains all things by foreknowledge, without coercing free will. Freedom is the spontaneity of an intellectual being. God has an antecedent will, which is only for good. He also has a consequent will to bring about the best world possible given the existence of evil. As best of all possible beings, God wills the best of all

possible worlds. Since this world is willed by God, it must be the best possible or least defective world.

Three kinds of evil exist: metaphysical (finitude), moral (sin), and physical (suffering). Finitude underlies sin and suffering. Sin is the result of ignorance, a confused or unclarified state. Evil is part of a total picture of good, giving darkness so that the light stands out in contrast (*see* EVIL, PROBLEM OF).

God is working to perfect the universe, which can only be done by perfecting people. God aims at perfecting an immortal soul through the universal church. This view of the church borrows from Augustine 's *The City of God* .

Evaluation. Some of the ideas of Leibniz are flawed, but his positive contributions should be recognized:

Positive Contributions. Through his work in developing calculus, Leibniz did an immense service to modern math and science, and he contributed to epistemology, metaphysics, theology, and theodicy as well.

Epistemology. Leibniz was a foundationalist (*see* FOUNDATIONALISM), who correctly stressed that knowledge is impossible without first principles. Even though many disagree with his belief in innate ideas, even Kant in his agnosticism acknowledged the necessity of an innate dimension to knowledge.

Metaphysics. As a theist (*see* THEIST), Leibniz believed in creation *ex nihilo* . He struggled with and gave modern form to theistic concepts in the tradition of Augustine , Anselm , and Thomas Aquinas. His cosmological argument has influenced theists.

Theodicy. Leibniz's solution to the problem of evil was classic (*see* EVIL, PROBLEM OF). It grappled with the origin, nature, and persistence of evil in a way that attempted to preserve both God's absolute perfection and human freedom. Further, in spite of justified criticisms, his concept of a "best possible world" is an essential element in theodicy.

Weaknesses. The central values notwithstanding, Leibniz is open to some criticism:

Rationalist epistemology. As Hume showed, the concept of innate ideas is contrary to experience. There is no evidence that we are born with a whole storehouse of ideas, waiting only to be activated. The *a priori* dimension to knowledge appears to be in the area of *capacity*, not *content* . That is, we are born with the capability to know truth, but not with a mind full of truths.

Dualism . Leibniz's dualism of mind and body leads to the unlikely views of parallelism, occasionalism, and established harmony of mind and body. There is no real interaction or unity between the two.

The principle of sufficient reason. In spite of the validity of many of Leibniz's first principles, the principle of sufficient reason leads logically to a contradictory, self-caused Being.

For if the cause of God's being is within himself, then God is self-caused. Unlike the first principle of causality of Aquinas, the principle of sufficient reason is not rooted in reality (*see* REALISM) but only in the realm of ideas. Finally, the principle is not undeniable, since one can say that something does not have a reason (cause) without engaging in a self-defeating statement. Indeed, the uncreated God is the ultimate uncaused Cause.

The ontological argument. Leibniz's form of the ontological argument is based on the widely rejected premise that existence is a perfection (*see* KANT, IMMANUEL). Further, his attempt to prove that the concept is logically possible fails to reach its goal. It is subject to the same criticism leveled against other pluralisms that hold to a univocal view of being (*see* ANALOGY, PRINCIPLE OF). It is impossible to avoid monism.

Even Leibniz's form of the otherwise valid cosmological argument gives no certain starting point being based only in the observation [appearance] of change.

View of evil. This view of free will tends to reduce to a form of determinism. For if it is God who gives the drive or desire for free choices, how can it be really free (*see* FREE WILL).

Likewise, his theodicy implies that the best God can do still involves evil. This was powerfully satirized by Voltaire's *Candide* . While God must do his best, this present world is not it. This is not the best possible world, though it may very well be the best possible way to the best possible world (*see* EVIL, PROBLEM OF).

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Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781) was the son of a scholarly German pastor who became a dramatist and critic. He studied theology at Leipzig University, where he imbibed the rationalism of the Enlightenment, whose leading spokesman was Christian Wolfe, a follower of Gottfried Leibniz. Lessing was influenced by the English deists (*see* DEISM). As a theater critic he came under the influence of the deist Hermann Reimarus, from whose book, *An Apology for Rational Worshippers of God* he published extracts in 1774 and 1777 to

1778 (*see* DEISM). Lessing finally came to be dominated by the pantheism of Benedict Spinoza

Lessing's influence on others was immense. It can be seen in the liberalism of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Samuel Coleridge, as well as the existentialism of Søren Kierkegaard and the historicism of G. W. F. Hegel and the positivism of Auguste Comte.

Views of God. Lessing came from a trinitarian (*see* TRINITY) background, but gradually adopted deist ideas and eventually became a Spinozan pantheist. As such, his life foreshadowed much of the history of the next two centuries. By 1753 Lessing indicated in *The Christianity of Reason* that he was moving toward pantheism, as he mixed Spinoza and Leibniz and denied that God is a superobject beyond or behind the world (see Chadwick, 445). His 1763 work, *On the Reality of Things Outside God*, which was published posthumously in 1795, denied traditional theism. He denied that a created world exists distinct from God.

Friedrich Jacobi, in *Letters to Moses Mendelssohn on Spinoza's Doctrine* (1785), related how, seven months before Lessing's death, the critic had told him of his rejection of transcendent metaphysics in deism. He had adopted the immanentistic view of Spinoza. This was confirmed by fragments found among Lessing's papers (ibid., 446).

Lessing not only believed that nothing exists outside the divine mind, but since ideas of contingent things are necessary, believed that a contingency exists inside God. This foreshadowed the later process theologians (*see* PANENTHEISM), such as Alfred North Whitehead.

History and the Gospels. In 1754 Lessing published a series of "Vindications," in which he defended a number of historical figures he believed had been badly treated by the church. While expressing sympathy with the Christian ethic in these leaders, he showed antipathy toward Christian doctrines.

Christ versus Jesus. The turning point for Lessing occurred in 1769. As librarian for the duke of Brunswick he began to publish fragments of a manuscript by the deist Reimarus (1766–69). The last fragment precipitated a controversy with Hamburg pastor Johann Goeze and touched off the quest for the historical Jesus (*see* CHRIST OF FAITH VS. JESUS OF HISTORY ; JESUS, QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL ; JESUS SEMINAR). Not only did Lessing distinguish between the Jesus of history and the Christ of Faith; he did a critical study of the sources of the Synoptic Gospels in *New Hypotheses Concerning the Evangelists Regarded as Merely Human Historians* (1784). Lessing's views were expressed in a play, "Nathan the Wise," which pleaded for love and tolerance rather than assent to a creed. Lessing's view was the essence of Enlightenment Christianity, the view that, beneath creedal accretions, Christianity is a moral code of universal brotherhood.

Lessing's "Ditch." The legacy of Lessing was a "ditch" dug between the contingent truths of history and the necessary truths of faith. He split the revelation of timeless truths from the time-bound, contingent truths of history. It was this huge gulf with which Kierkegaard struggled and from which he took his "leap of faith" (see *Fear and Trembling*).

Lessing affirmed that the "accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason" (Chadwick, 445). There is no logical connection between historical realities and faith. Faith truths are mathematical and *a priori*, independent of experience. The former are *a posteriori*, contingent truths of experience. Therefore, historical narrative can never convey knowledge of God.

Relativism. Lessing was more a relativist than a skeptic. He immortalized his view in the aphorism, "If God held all truth in his right hand and in his left the everlasting striving after truth, so that I should always and everlastingly be mistaken and said to me, Choose, with humility I would pick on the left hand and say, Father grant me that; absolute truth is for thee alone" (Chadwick, 445).

Evaluation. Lessing's self-claimed humility aside, it is clear that the net result of his views a self-defeating form of agnosticism, relativism (*see* TRUTH, NATURE OF), and a dichotomy of fact and value and of history and faith (*see* APOLOGETICS, ARGUMENT OF ; NEW TESTAMENT, MANUSCRIPTS ; NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS, RELIABILITY OF). One insightful assessment is that "Lessing spent his life hoping that Christianity was true and arguing that it was not" (Chadwick, 445).

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"Lessing's Ditch." See LESSING, GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM .

Lewis, C. S. Because much of his work was in popular media, including radio broadcasts and children's stories, Clive Staples Lewis (1898–1963) is arguably the most influential twentieth-century Christian theist and apologist (*see* APOLOGETICS, NEED FOR). An Oxford University professor, this former atheist so expressed profound truths in simple language that he reached into the hearts of millions. Lewis disclaimed being a philosopher or theologian, but his insight into the essentials of theism made him a significant apologist and communicator.

The Nature and Existence of God. Lewis accepted the Augustine-Anselm-Aquinas view of God as eternal, necessary, transcendent, morally perfect, and personal (*see* GOD, NATURE OF). God transcends space and time: "Almost certainly God is not in Time. His life does not consist of moments following one another. . . . Ten-thirty—and every other moment from the beginning of the world—is always the Present for Him." To put it another way, "He has all eternity in

which to listen to the split second of prayer put up by a pilot as his plane crashes in flames” (*Mere Christianity*, 146).

God is, nevertheless, immanent (present and operating) in creation. Lewis wrote: “Looking for God—or Heaven—by exploring space is like reading or seeing all Shakespeare’s plays in the hope that you will find Shakespeare as one of the characters or Stratford as one of the places. Shakespeare is in one sense present at every moment in every play. But he is never present in the same way as Falstaff or Lady Macbeth. Nor is he diffused through the play like a gas” (*Christian Reflections*, 167–68).

The Cosmological Argument . Although he accepted a theistic form of evolution (see below), Lewis believed in creation out of nothing (see CREATION, VIEWS OF). For “What God creates is not God; just as what man makes is not man” (*God in the Dock*, 138). He explained that matter is not coeternal with God:

Entropy by its very character assures us that though it may be the universal rule in the Nature we know, it cannot be universal absolutely. If a man says, “Humpty Dumpty is falling,” you see at once that this is not a complete story. The bit you have been told implies both a later chapter in which Humpty Dumpty will have reached the ground, and an earlier chapter in which he was still seated on the wall. A Nature which is “running down” cannot be the whole story. A clock can’t run down unless it has been wound up.” [Lewis, *Miracles*, 157]

Matter is the product of a cosmic Mind (see DUALISM). “But to admit *that* sort of cosmic mind is to admit a God outside Nature, a transcendent and supernatural God” (*ibid.*, 30). The universe is matter. Matter cannot produce mind; only mind can produce matter (see MATERIALISM). The creation of the world was not from some pre-existing matter or stuff. It was created from nothing. God created this world freely: “The freedom of God consists in the fact that no cause other than Himself produces His acts and no external obstacle impedes them—that His own goodness is the root from which they all grow and His own omnipotence the air in which they all flower.” (*Problem of Pain*, 23).

God did not create the world because he had to; he created it because he wanted to. The existence of the universe is entirely contingent on the good will of the Creator.

The Moral Argument . Lewis begins *Mere Christianity* with the premise that an objective moral law, such as even common disagreements presuppose, entails a Moral Law Giver. There is “something which is directing the universe, and which appears in me as a law urging me to do right and making me feel responsible and uncomfortable when I do wrong. I think we have to assume it is more like a mind than it is like anything else we know—because after all the only other thing we know is matter and you can hardly imagine a bit of matter giving instructions” (*Mere Christianity*, 34).

Lewis’s argument can be summarized:

1. There must be an objective, universal moral law, or else no ethical judgments make sense (see MORALITY, ABSOLUTE NATURE OF). Nothing could be called evil or wrong, and there would be no reason to keep promises or treaties (*God in the Dock*, chap. 1).
2. This moral law does not originate with us. In fact, we are bound by it.
3. The source of this law is more like mind than matter, and it cannot be part of the universe any more than an architect is part of the building he designs.
4. Therefore, there exists a Moral Law Giver who is the ultimate source and standard of all right and wrong (*ibid.*, chap. 7).

For a fuller discussion of Lewis’s moral law argument and its defense, see his section in the article MORAL ARGUMENT FOR GOD .

The Nature of Human Beings. However science may show that the human body emerged, the process was divinely initiated and consummated by God in the creation of a rational human soul.

Human Beings Are Rational. Lewis would not blush at the appellation “rationalist.” Repeatedly he exalts human rationality. He writes, “I couldn’t get at the universe unless I could trust my reason. If we couldn’t trust inference we could know nothing but our own existence” (*God in the Dock*, 277). “The heart never takes the place of the head; but can and should obey it” (*The Abolition of Man*, 30).

There also must be an ultimate reason or explanation. “You cannot go on ‘explaining away’ forever: you will find that you have explained explanation itself away.” Moreover, “you cannot go on ‘seeing through’ things forever.” Consequently, “it is no use trying to ‘see through’ first principles. If you see through everything, then everything is transparent.” But “to ‘see through’ all things is the same as not to see” (*ibid.*, 91).

Lewis believed rational thought is undeniable. He insists that “all arguments [against] the validity of thought make a tacit, and illegitimate, exception in favor of the bit of thought you are doing at that moment.” Hence, “the validity of thought is central: all other things have to be fitted in round it as best they can” (Lewis, *Miracles*, 23).

Human Beings Are Moral. Emphasis on the rational nature does not negate human emotions. Those who put thinking above feeling are for Lewis “men without chests” (Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, 34). “The head rules the belly through the chest—the seat . . . of emotions organized by trained habit into stable sentiments.” Without this middle element “man is vain: for by his intellect he is mere spirit and by his appetite mere animal” (*ibid.*, 34). Beyond the moral nature stands an attainable moral ideal. Lewis would agree with the statement that the primary value of education is an education in primary values. Education fulfills its proper purpose as it cultivates value judgments to help perfect the moral nature. Without trained emotions, the intellect is powerless against the animal (*ibid.*, 33, 34). Thus, Lewis observes, it is better to play cards with a skeptic who is a gentleman than a moral philosopher who was brought up among card sharks

(ibid., 34). Only because we stand within God's law can we speak of having the power of self-control (ibid., 86).

Secular humanism, in a sort of ghastly simplicity, removes the moral organ and yet demands the moral function. "We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honour and are shocked to find traitors in our midst" (ibid., 35).

Human Beings Are Creative. Characteristically, Lewis also affirmed the aesthetic nature within an ideal of human creatorhood. Dorothy Sayers's *Toward a Christian Aesthetic* calls the idea of art as *creation* Christianity's most important contribution to aesthetics (6). The artist or writer is not the Creator, but a sub-creator. Creative expression expresses the image of an artist's inner feelings even as the Invisible God was visibly expressed in the incarnation of his Son. He and other Christians of his Oxford University circle, called the Inklings, produced an immense literary body. Lewis himself wrote

seven fantasy genre books of the Narnia Chronicles: *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* ; *Prince Caspian* ; *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* ; *The Magician's Nephew* ; *The Horse and His Boy* ; *The Silver Chair* ; and *The Last Battle* .

a "space trilogy," that explored the nature of God's battle with personal and societal evil in the guise of three interlocking science fiction stories: *Out of the Silent Planet* , *Perelandra* , and *That Hideous Strength* .

Screwtape Letters and *The Great Divorce* , deceptively light stories reflecting the dynamics of temptation and rebellion against God.

a series of BBC radio lectures expanded into an apologetic classic, *Mere Christianity* , as well as deeper works in apologetics and philosophy, including *God in the Dock* , *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature* , *The Abolition of Man* , and *The Problem of Pain* .

his intellectual and spiritual autobiography, *Surprised by Joy* .

the moving story of his crisis of faith at his wife's death, *A Grief Observed* .

a variety of literary criticism articles and studies.

voluminous personal correspondence, a sampling of which was published in *Letters to an American Lady* .

Human Beings Are Immortal. Lewis also affirmed humanity's eternal value (*see* IMMORTALITY). This affirmation springs from the belief that each person is made in God's image. To affirm humanity while denying the ultimate moral value does not affirm real human value at all. Secularist humanists, Lewis believed, abolish, rather than affirm, humanity (see *The Abolition of Man* and an allegorical version of its message, *That Hideous Strength*). In denying the human immortal, moral and God-like nature they deny personhood and sweep away the basis for treating the individual with ultimate respect (*The Abolition of Man*, 76, 77).

The irony, then, is that, as secular humanists elevate humanity to godhood, they sweep away all humanity, with its accompanying right to respect. By contrast, Christianity, in affirming that the basis for ultimate value comes from a transcendent God, preserves the basis for ultimate human dignity.

So secularist humanism dehumanizes what it seeks to deify. Only the Christian view retains true humanness. For Lewis holds that "either we are rational spirit obliged forever to obey the absolute values of the *Tao* [moral law], or else we are mere nature to be kneaded and cut into new shapes" (ibid., 84). The only guarantee against tyranny and slavery is to affirm immortal human worth in the context of an absolute moral law. For "the process which, if not checked, will abolish Man, goes on apace among Communists and Democrats no less than among Fascists" (ibid., 85). Only within the absolute moral law is there a concrete reality in which to be truly human (ibid., 86).

Human Beings Have Dignity. Following from rationality and moral responsibility is human dignity. There is a firm basis for this virtue in the immortal human-God-like nature: A person has rational, moral and volitional abilities. This is why punishment for wrongdoing is appropriate. The person knows better and deserves to be penalized for unlawful action (*God in the Dock*, 292). Punishment is a complement to human dignity.

Citing Martin Buber , Lewis exhorts science not to treat the person as an "It" but to recognize the human "Thou" (Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, 90). We must never surrender any human to science as a mere object to control. This, says Lewis, is "a 'magician's bargain' . . . whereby man surrenders object after object, and finally himself, to Nature in return for power" (ibid., 87). When science is allowed to take control, it has the same goal as magic, though its means differ (ibid., 89). He reminds us that even the father of modern science, Francis Bacon, condemned those who make scientific knowledge an end, rather than a means (ibid., 88). Lewis called science to repentance: "The regenerate science which I have in mind would not do even to minerals and vegetables what modern science threatens to do to man himself" (ibid., 89, 90).

Lewis chides the secularists for boasting in science. "As regards the powers manifested in the aeroplane or the wireless, man is as much the patient or subject as the possessor, since he is the target both for bombs and for propaganda" (ibid., 68). What we call power over nature turns out to be power by some people over others (ibid., 69). "Each new power won *by* man is a power *over* man as well. Each advance leaves him weaker as well as stronger" (ibid., 71).

Unless those in control of power are bound by an objective moral law, the power gained will be used only to bind, and not to benefit, the human race. Says Lewis, "I am very doubtful whether history shows us one example of a man who, having stepped outside traditional morality and attained power, has used that power benevolently" (ibid., 75). The final irony is that when humankind steps outside the moral law, which Lewis calls the *Tao*, the Chinese word for "way," they become no longer human, but artifacts. "Man's final conquest has proved to be the abolition of Man" (ibid., 77).

So biased against Lewis' penal view of justice were the secular humanists of his day that no academic publication would publish him on the topic. His definitive statement was first

published in an Australian journal and later incorporated into *God in the Dock*. In this article Lewis attacks secular humanism's reformatory view of justice. He argues that it is tyranny to subject a human being to an undesired, compulsory cure. The reformatory view is "illusory humanitarianism," which disguises cruelty on the false premise that crime is pathological, not moral. In fact, the reformatory view dehumanizes the individual, treating him as a patient or case, rather than as a person. Lewis insists that to be 'cured' against one's will puts the man or woman in a class with those who cannot think for themselves and never will. Even severe punishment of a person as a rational human being treats the person as an image-bearer of God (*God in the Dock*, 292).

Lewis was keenly aware of the danger of replacing the objective moral law of God with subjective political laws (*see* LAW, NATURE AND KINDS OF). History shows that dictators who step outside the moral law are invariably not benevolent. The potential for evil when great power resides in a person's political grasp is horrendous. This message also figures into the social commentary of the allegorical *That Hideous Strength*.

Miracles. Naturalism claims that nature is "the whole show." So if naturalism is true, then every event in nature must be explicable in terms of the total system of nature. But human (inferential) reason, such as even naturalists assume and exercise, cannot be explained strictly in terms of nonrational natural causes. Moreover, "the Naturalist cannot condemn other people's thoughts because they have irrational causes and continue to believe his own, which have (if Naturalism is true) equally irrational causes" (*Miracles*, 22). Furthermore, argues Lewis, if naturalism is right then there is no reason that the thoughts of a lunatic or drug addict should not be valued by a naturalist as much as his or her own thoughts. This is the self-contradiction of naturalism.

There is more than nature; there is mind which cannot be reduced to matter. And there is value (ought), which cannot be reduced to nature (what is). In fact, there is an absolute moral Mind behind nature who gives the moral law.

Evil. According to Lewis, evil is not eternal, as dualism claims.

The two Powers, the good and the evil, do not explain each other. Neither . . . can claim to be the Ultimate. More ultimate than either of them is the inexplicable fact of their being there together. Neither of them chose this *tete-a-tete*. Each of them, therefore, is *conditioned*—finds himself willy-nilly in a situation; and either that situation itself, or some unknown force which produced that situation, is the real Ultimate. Dualism has not yet reached the ground of being. You cannot accept two conditioned and mutually independent beings as the self-grounded, self-comprehending Absolute. [*God in the Dock*, 22]

Evil arose from free choice (*see* FREE WILL). This does not mean that it is evil to be free. In freedom we most resemble God and take part in eternal reality (ibid., 129). Christianity agrees with dualists that the universe is at war. But the Christian does not think this is a war between independent powers. It is, rather, a civil rebellion, and we are living in territory occupied by the rebel (*Mere Christianity*, 51). This rebellion was not at first a turning to wickedness.

"Wickedness, when you examine it, turns out to be the pursuit of some good in the wrong way" (ibid., 49).

Like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, C. S. Lewis believed that evil does not exist in itself but as a corruption of good (*see* EVIL, PROBLEM OF). "Goodness is, so to speak, itself: badness is only spoiled goodness. And there must be something good first before it can be spoiled" (ibid., 49). Even the devil is a fallen angel. So "evil is a parasite, not an original thing" (ibid., 50).

God does not permit evil without a good purpose. Even physical evil has a moral impact. For "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world" (*Problem of Pain*, 81).

Human Beings. So human beings are free rational and moral beings with an immortal soul. But each is in a body in a material world with other bodies. Lewis wrote: "A creature with no environment would have no choices to make: so that freedom, like self-consciousness (if they are not, indeed, the same thing) again demands the presence to the self of something other than the self" (ibid., 17).

The human environment is called nature. But humanity is more than natural processes. Humans think rationally, and "no thought is valid if it can be fully explained as the result of irrational causes." Every worldview that makes the human mind a result of irrational causes is inadmissible. Such a view "would be a proof that there are no such things as proofs, which is nonsense" (*Miracles*, 21).

The human is both a rational and a moral being. Without a moral nature there would be no true humanity, so those who would abolish the moral law would abolish humanity in the bargain (*Abolition of Man*, 77):

Either we are rational spirit obliged for ever to obey the absolute values of the *Tao*, or else we are mere nature to be kneaded and cut into new shapes for the pleasure of masters who must, by hypothesis, have no motive but their own "natural" impulses. Only the *Tao* provides a common human law of action which can over-arch rulers and ruled alike. A dogmatic belief in objective value is necessary to the very idea of a rule which is not tyranny or an obedience which is not slavery. [ibid., 84–85]

Ethics. The moral human creature is obligated to live by an absolute moral law (*see* MORALITY, ABSOLUTE NATURE OF) that transcends human law. Such was what the framers of the Declaration of Independence had in mind when they wrote of the "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" and of "certain unalienable rights" with which all are "endowed by their Creator." As moral creatures, created in God's image, we have certain absolute obligations toward others.

This objective moral law is prescriptive, not descriptive. It lays down the principles by which we ought to live; it does not merely express the way we do live. It is not social convention, for it sometimes condemns society. Neither is it herd instinct, for we sometimes act out of a sense of duty against our instinct for self-preservation (*Mere Christianity*, 22). We can progress in our understanding, but the moral law itself does not change (*Abolition of Man*, 58, 59).

History and the Goal. Life is the proving ground for eternity. During life, each rational creature makes a lifetime decision. All play the game, and “if a game is played, it must be possible to lose it.” Of course, adds Lewis, “I would pay any price to be able to say truthfully ‘All will be saved.’ But my reason retorts, ‘Without their will, or with it?’ If I say ‘Without their will,’ I at once perceive a contradiction; how can the supreme voluntary act of self-surrender be involuntary? If I say ‘With their will,’ my reason replies ‘How if they *will not* give in?’ ” (*Problem of Pain*, 106–7).

At the end of life and history, Lewis finds two kinds of people: “those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’ All that are in hell, choose it.” Lewis believed “without that self-choice there could be no hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek, find. To those who knock it is opened” (*The Great Divorce*, 69). Thus, the doors of hell are locked on the *inside*. Even those who *wish* to come out of hell would not do so at the expense of self-abandonment through which alone the soul can reach any good (*The Great Divorce*, 127).

Evaluation. In spite of Lewis’s overwhelming value to Christian apologetics, not everything in his views is compatible with evangelical Christianity. Lewis wrote one of the finest critiques of naturalism in print (*Miracles*), in which he defended literal New Testament miracles, including the resurrection of Christ. Nevertheless, Lewis inconsistently denied the literal nature of many Old Testament miracles (see MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE):

The Hebrews, like other peoples, had mythology: but as they were the chosen people so their mythology was the chosen mythology—the mythology chosen by God to be the vehicle of the earliest sacred truths, the first step in that process which ends in the New Testament where truth has become completely historical. Whether we can ever say with certainty where, in this process of crystallisation, any particular Old Testament story falls, is another matter. I take it that the memoirs of David’s court come at one end of the scale and are scarcely less historical than *St. Mark* or *Acts*; and that the *Book of Jonah* is at the opposite end. [*Miracles*, 139]

Lewis accepted the deity of Christ. But he did not believe in a Christ who verified the historicity and authenticity of some of the very Old Testament events Lewis rejects. Jesus verified the literal truth of Jonah (Matt. 12:40), of the nonevolutionary creation of Adam and Eve (Matt. 19:4), of the flood (Matt. 24:38–39), and of other miraculous events (see Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 3–35). Lewis seems to read into the Old Testament a non-Christian development of myth (see MIRACLES, MYTH AND). This is especially surprising in view of his criticism of New Testament scholars who do the same. Lewis chides them:

A theology which denies the historicity of nearly everything in the Gospels to which Christian life and affections and thought have been fastened for nearly two millennia—which either denies the miraculous altogether or, more strangely, after swallowing the camel of the Resurrection strains at such gnats as the feeding of the multitudes—if offered to the uneducated man can produce only one or other of two effects. It will make him a Roman Catholic or an atheist. [*Christian Reflections*, 153]

Lewis does recognize that he might be wrong about Old Testament miracles. He admits that his view is tentative and liable to error, and that the subject matter is beyond his knowledge:

A consideration of the Old Testament miracles is beyond the scope of this book and would require many kinds of knowledge which I do not possess. My present view—which is tentative and liable to any amount of correction—would be that just as, on the factual side, a long preparation culminates in God’s becoming incarnate as Man, so, on the documentary side, the truth first appears in *mythical* form and then by a long process of condensing or focussing finally becomes incarnate as History. [*Miracles*, 139]

Lewis also accepted other higher critical ideas about the Old Testament (see BIBLE CRITICISM). He questioned the historicity of Job, “because it begins about a man quite unconnected with all history or even legend, with no genealogy, living in a country of which the Bible elsewhere has hardly anything to say” (*Mere Christianity*, 110). Lewis held this in spite of references to Job as historical in both Old (Ezek. 14:14, 20) and New Testaments (James 5:11). Uz is mentioned in Jeremiah 25:20 and Lamentations 4:21. Customs and forms of proper names connected with Job also have been verified (Archer, 438–48).

Lewis held a very negative view of many Psalms, even calling some “devilish” (*Reflections on the Psalms*, 25). He rejected the Davidic authorship of all but Psalm 18 (ibid., 114). This is especially surprising given Lewis’s high view of Christ and the Gospels. Jesus verified that David wrote Psalm 110 (Matt. 22:41–46). Jesus also affirmed the divine authority of the whole Old Testament (Matt. 5:17–18 ; John 10:35) and especially the Psalms (cf. Luke 24:44), which was one of the books he quoted most frequently.

Although he had some later doubts (Ferngreen), his own educational background apparently led Lewis to assume an evolutionary (see EVOLUTION, BIOLOGICAL) view of the universe’s origin (see *Mere Christianity*, 52, 65). That even so pious and courageous an intellectual apologist as Lewis could be sucked into humanist and higher critical assumptions shows that each believer must continually evaluate the truth of what he or she is learning in a secular pagan environment.

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Limitation of Christ, Theory of. Bible critics have offered two theories that undermine the apologetic argument for the deity of Christ (*see* CHRIST, DEITY OF) and the authority of Scripture (*see* BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR). A crucial link in the overall argument for both is that Jesus taught that he was the Son of God and that the Bible is the Word of God (*see* APOLOGETICS, ARGUMENT OF). These propositions are based on the premise that the Gospels accurately tell us what Jesus taught. If Jesus intentionally accommodated his words to what his audience believed but did not disclose what he really believed, then the conclusion does not hold (*see* ACCOMMODATION THEORY).

Likewise, if Jesus was so limited in his human knowledge that it did not extend to such matters as the authority and authenticity of the Old Testament, he was not really affirming these matters. Rather, his ministry was limited to spiritual and moral matters, and he affirmed nothing about historical and critical matters.

The Case for a Limited Christ. Two supporting pillars in the argument for limitation are the *humanity of Christ* and the *kenosis theory* .

Humanly Limited Knowledge. The Bible makes clear that Jesus was human (*see* CHRIST, DEITY OF). But if Jesus was truly human in every respect, why could he not experience human error? Why could Jesus not have been wrong about many of the things he believed, so long as they did not hinder his overall redemptive mission?

Emptying at the Incarnation. The Bible further teaches that Jesus "emptied himself" of his omniscience at his incarnation. That this severely limited his knowledge when he taught is called the *kenosis* theory, from the Greek word *kenoo m* , to "empty." He was ignorant of the time of his second coming, for he said, "No one knows about that day and hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mark 13:32). He did not know whether figs were on the tree in Mark 11:13 . As a child he "increased in wisdom," as do other children (Luke 2:52).

He had to ask questions (Mark 5:9 , 30 ; 6:38 ; John 14:9). Perhaps Jesus was also ignorant of the origin of the Old Testament and of the historical truth of its record.

Response to the Limitation View. The "limitation theory" is more plausible and potentially more damaging than the accommodation theory. But both arguments in favor of the limitation of Christ's understanding ignore crucial points about who Jesus was.

Can God err or sin? In Jesus, one and the same person was both God and human at the same time. If the human person had sinned or erred, then God would have sinned or erred. This is why the Bible is careful to say, "We have one who was tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He was human enough to be tired and tempted, but not to be sinful (*see* 2 Cor. 5:21 ; 1 Peter 3:18 ; 1 John 3:3). If a sin attributed to Christ must also be attributed to God, who cannot sin (Hab. 1:13 ; Heb. 6:18), then an error attributed to Christ would have been an error God made (*see* TRINITY).

The *kenosis* theory that Jesus emptied himself of deity when he became human is unfounded. It is certainly not the meaning of Philippians 2 . Verses 5 and 6 say that he emptied himself of his divine nature by humbling himself to become a human being. When he emptied himself he was still in the form or essence of God. If the same word, *form* , as applied to a servant means he was a servant, then applied to God it means he is God. This is what John 1:1 declares. The human Jesus claimed to be God. How he showed that to be so is covered at length in the article Christ, Deity of. The incarnation did not subtract deity; it added humanity. An error or sin would have been attributable to the second person of the godhead.

Since the orthodox doctrine of Christ acknowledges that he was fully human, there is no problem with the statement that Jesus was ignorant of many things. He had two natures, one infinite or unlimited in knowledge, the other finite or limited in knowledge. Could it be that Jesus did not really "err" in what he taught about the Old Testament but that he was simply so limited that his human knowledge and authority did not extend into those areas? The evidence in the New Testament records demands an emphatic negative answer to that question.

Jesus had supranormal knowledge. Even in his human state, Christ possessed super-human knowledge. He saw Nathaniel under the fig tree (John 1:48). Jesus knew the private life of the Samaritan woman (John 4:18–19). He knew who would betray him (John 6:64) and all that would happen in Jerusalem (Mark 8:31 ; 9:31 ; John 18:4). He knew about Lazarus' death before he was told (John 11:14). Whatever his limitations, Jesus' knowledge was completely adequate for his mission and doctrinal teaching.

Jesus possessed final authority. Christ claimed, with absolute and final authority, that whatever he taught came from God. "Heaven and earth will pass away but my word will not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Jesus proclaimed that "all things have been delivered to me by my Father" (Matt. 11:27). He told his disciples to teach others "to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:18–19). Jesus claimed that the very destiny of people hung on his words (Matt. 7:24–26) and that his words would be the basis for judgment (John 12:48). The emphatic *amen*, *amen* or "Truly, truly" is used to preface his teachings twenty-five times in John alone. In Matthew he declared that not a single stroke would pass from the law that he had come to fulfill.

Then, throughout the rest of Matthew 5, Jesus placed his own words on a par with that law. He claimed that his words bring eternal life (John 5:24), and vowed that his teaching came from the Father (John 8:26–28). Despite the fact that he was a human being on earth, Christ accepted acknowledgment as deity (for example, Matt. 28:18 ; John 9:38).

Conclusion. The most reasonable conclusion is that Jesus’ teachings possessed divine authority. Despite the necessary limitations involved in a human incarnation, there is no error or misunderstanding in what Christ taught. Whatever limits there were in the extent of Jesus’ knowledge, there were no limits to the truthfulness of his teachings. Just as Jesus was fully human, yet his *moral* character was without flaw (Heb. 4:15), likewise he was finite in human knowledge and yet without factual error in what he taught (John 8:40 , 46). Whatever Jesus taught came from God and carried divine authority.

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Locke, John.

The Life and Works of Locke. Locke was born in Somersetshire, England, in 1632 and died in 1704. He disliked his scholastic training, but read and enjoyed Rene Descartes and Francis Bacon. His work on tolerance strongly influenced the American Revolution—Thomas Jefferson in particular.

Locke’s main writings included *An Essay Concerning Toleration* (1667), *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), and *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695).

The Empirical Epistemology of Locke. Locke was an empiricist, following the work of Aristotle (*see*). In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* he called his epistemology “the plain historical method,” that is, treating ideas just as they appear in our minds. His goal was to discover the origin, extent, and degree of certainty in our knowledge.

The Two Sources of Ideas. Locke believed there were two sources of ideas (or, objects of thought): (1) sensation—experience of an external object (which presses on the body and produces an idea in the mind), and (2) reflection—experience of internal operations of the mind. As proof he offered four arguments. First, children are born as *tabula rasas* (blank slates) without a store of ideas. Second, where there are different experiences, there are different ideas.

Third, where there is no experience, there is no corresponding idea. For example, persons born blind have no idea of sight, nor do deaf mutes have an idea of sound. Fourth, we have only ideas that fit one or more of the five senses (or combinations thereof).

The Nature of Knowledge. For Locke all knowledge is either agreement or disagreement.

Intuition is agreement between two ideas immediately perceived (e.g., “I” and “exist” = I exist). This is the most certain kind of knowledge.

Demonstration is agreement between two ideas seen by way of a third idea (e.g., “God exists”). This is less certain to us only because the chain of argument makes it so.

Sensation is agreement between an idea and an external object (e.g., “The world exists”). This is less certain. Locke’s proof of an external world went like this: (1) There must be a source of our ideas. Not all of them could have been created by us. (2) Some ideas are more lively than others, showing that they are original and not created by us. (3) We have combined testimony of several senses that these lively ideas come from the external world. (4) Pleasure and/or pain repeatedly occurs upon contact with it, even when we do not will it. Hence, there must be an external world that is the source of these lively ideas over which we have no control.

Locke’s Proof for the Existence of God. Locke’s proof for the existence of God follows the line of the traditional cosmological argument (*see*). (1) Something exists. For example, I exist (which is known by intuition). Further, the world exists (which is known by sensation). (2) This something that exists comes either (a) from itself, (b) from nothing, or (c) from another. But (3) only something can cause something. Something cannot be caused by nothing. (4) There cannot be an infinite series of causes of the existence of the world. If there were, the whole world would rest on nothing. But this is impossible, for in this case (since nothing cannot cause something) the world would never have come into existence. Therefore, (5) there must be a first cause of my existence and the world. (6) This eternal being must be most powerful and most knowing. It must be most powerful because it is the source of all power, and it must be most knowing because the cognitive cannot arise from the noncognitive. Locke believed it was ridiculous to say everything else has a mind behind it except the universe.

The Defense of Christianity. Building on his rational theism, Locke argued in the tradition of classical apologetics (*see* APOLOGETICS, CLASSICAL). In his *Reasonableness of Christianity* he defended the existence of miracles. In his two *Vindications* (1695, 1697) he defended what he said in the *Reasonableness of Christianity* .

The Defense of the Supernatural. Locke was neither a Deist (*see* DEISM) nor a Socinian who denied the resurrection (*see* RESURRECTION, EVIDENCE FOR). He defended miracles, as well as the Bible as the Word of God (*see* BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR). He believed the Bible could be defended by reason, but that it contained mysteries of the Christian faith that go beyond reason.

The Deity of Christ. He also defended Christ’s deity (*see* CHRIST, DEITY OF), claiming “we see the people justified their believing in him, i.e., their believing him to be the Messiah, because of the miracles he did” (*Reasonableness of Christianity* [58] 1). He added of Jesus, “He was sent by God: His miracles shew it” (*ibid.*, 242). There is a conspicuous absence of discussion on the Trinity. However, absence does not necessarily mean denial. Though Locke admits in a letter to Limborch that he said some things to please the Deists (*see* DEISM), he explicitly denied Arianism.

Locke's View of Ethics and Government. Locke held that the "law of Nature" (*see* NATURAL LAW) teaches us that "being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions; for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker" (*An Essay concerning Toleration* , 2.6).

This same view was expressed by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence (1776) when he wrote: "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

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Logic. Logic deals with the methods of valid thinking. It reveals how to draw proper conclusions from premises and is a prerequisite of all thought. In fact, it builds from fundamental laws of reality and truth, the principles that make rational thought possible (*see* FIRST PRINCIPLES). Logic is such an indispensable and inescapable tool for all thought that even those who eschew it still use logical forms to argue for their rejection of it (*see* FIDEISM).

The three fundamental laws of all rational thought are:

1. the law of noncontradiction (A is not non-A),
2. the law of identity (A is A), and
3. the law of excluded middle (either A or non-A).

Each serves an important function. Without the law of noncontradiction we could say that God is God, and God is the Devil. Unless the law of identity is binding, there can be no unity or identity. Without it there is no difference in stating, "I am I" or am a chair." If the law of excluded middle does not hold, then opposites could both be true.

Beyond these basic principles, there are the principles of valid inference. These inferences traditionally were classed under *deductive* or *inductive* logic (*see* INDUCTIVE METHOD), or under transcendental arguments. All of these, however, use some form of the three basic laws.

Logic and God. If logic is the basis of all thought, it is the basis of all thought about God (theology). Some object that this makes God subject to logic. But God is sovereign and not subject to anything beyond himself. So, how can thought about God be subject to logic?

In one sense God is not subject to logic; rather, our *statements* about God are subservient to logic. All rational statements must be logical. Since theology purports to make rational statements, theological statements are subject to rules of rational thought, as are any other statements.

In another sense, God indeed is subject to logic, but not because there is something more ultimate than he. Since logic represents the principles of rational thought and since God is a rational Being, God is subject to his own rational nature. Insofar as logic manifests reason it flows from the very nature of God, and God is subject to his own nature. Indeed, he cannot act contrary to it, ethically or logically. For example, "It is impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18). Likewise, it is impossible for God to contradict himself. Both violate his basic nature (*see* GOD, NATURE OF).

God is not only subject to his own rational self-consistency; he also is subject to logic which is derived from it. For we could not even begin to think about or talk about God without the law of noncontradiction. In this sense, logic is prior to God in that we need to use logic before we can even think about him rationally. Logic is prior to God in the *order of knowing*, but God is prior to logic in the *order of being* . Logic is prior to God *epistemologically*, but God is prior to logic *ontologically* .

To object that this makes God subject to our logic sets up a faulty dichotomy. Logic is logic; it is not "our" logic as opposed to "his." Ours is based on his. God's rational nature is the basis of our rational nature. He made it that way so we could understand something about him. The law of noncontradiction applies to God's thoughts as well as to ours. People did not *invent* it; they *discovered* it.

Rationality versus Rationalism . Others protest that making truths about God subject to human reason is a form of rationalism (*see* EPISTEMOLOGY ; SPINOZA, BENEDICT). However, this objection overlooks several important things. First, God is not being subjected to our reason. God is the author of reason, and he created us to be like himself. So the basic principles of reason are not arbitrarily imposed on God; rather, they come from God (*see* FAITH AND REASON).

Second, the basic laws of reason are not opposed to God's revelation; they are an essential part of God's general revelation. Human rationality, with its basic laws, is a manifestation of God's rationality. God is rational, and humans are made in his image. So using logic is not opposed to revelation; it is part of it.

Third, even special revelation (*see* REVELATION, SPECIAL) cannot be known or communicated apart from logic. We would not even be able to distinguish the revelation from God from that of the Devil unless the law of noncontradiction is valid. Furthermore, when the Bible reveals that "God so loved the world," we could not know that love is not hate unless the

law of noncontradiction is valid. So logic is essential to special revelation (*see* REVELATION, SPECIAL) as well as to general revelation (*see* REVELATION, GENERAL).

Finally, there is a difference between using reason and being a rationalist. A rationalist tries to *determine* all truth by human reason. A reasonable Christian merely uses reason to *discover* truth that God has revealed, either by general revelation or by special revelation in the Bible (*see* BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR).

Logic and Aristotle. Some critics of traditional logic object that Aristotle invented logic, and there is no reason we must accept his Western form of logic over an “Eastern” type that does not use the law of noncontradiction. However, Aristotle did not *invent* logic; he *discovered* it. The laws of rational thought were in operation eternally in God and from the very beginning in rational creatures. Aristotle only *articulated* them.

This criticism also implies that “Eastern” thought can avoid using logic. But as we have seen, the basic laws of thought are inescapable for all rational beings, whatever their culture and worldview. No “Eastern” philosopher (*see* ZEN BUDDHISM) can even think or speak without using the law of noncontradiction. The very denial of this law employs the law in its denial. It is literally undeniable (*see* UNDENIABILITY, PRINCIPLE OF).

Many Kinds of Logic. Others object that there are many kinds of logic. Why choose just one kind and make it the norm for all kinds? In response, it need only be noted that while there are many kinds of logic (deductive, inductive, symbolic, etc.), nonetheless, all forms of logic depend on the basic rational principles of thought stated above. For example, no valid form of logic can operate apart from the principle of noncontradiction. If contradictories can be true, then thought itself is impossible. But we cannot deny thought without thinking. Hence, denying the laws of thought is literally unthinkable.

Logic and Omnipotence. The Bible says that “nothing is impossible for God” (Matt. 19:26). He is all-powerful (omnipotent), and an omnipotent Being can do anything. Therefore, it would seem that God could violate the law of noncontradiction if he wished. However, this is based on a misconception. When the Bible declares that God can do what is impossible it does not refer to what is *actually* impossible but to what is *humanly* impossible.

Further, omnipotence does not imply that God can do what is contradictory. If it did, then God could cease being God. But it is impossible for the Uncreated to decide that he wants to be created. It is impossible for a Necessary Being (which cannot cease to be) to decide it does not want to be. God cannot contradict his own nature. So omnipotence does not mean that God can do literally anything. The Bible says that “It is impossible for God to lie” (Heb. 6:18 ; cf. 2 Tim. 2:13). And just as God cannot contradict his moral nature, so he cannot contradict his rational nature. Indeed, omnipotence only means that God can do anything that is not actually contradictory or impossible. For example, God cannot make a square circle. Neither can he make a stone so heavy he cannot lift it. For if he can make it, then he can move it. He doesn’t even have to “move” it. All he would have to do is to destroy it and recreate it wherever he wanted it to be.

Logic and Miracles. God created natural laws, yet he can transcend them by miracles (*see* MIRACLE). God engineered the law of gravity and the viscosity of liquids, but Jesus walked on water. Why can’t the laws of logic be broken like the laws of physics?

First, this is an invalid analogy. Laws of nature are *descriptive*, whereas logical laws, like ethical laws, are *prescriptive*. That is, laws of logic tell us how we ought to reason in order to conform our thought to how things really are. Like moral laws, they are universal prescriptions (*see* MORALITY, ABSOLUTE NATURE OF). Everyone should reason that if all triangles have three sides and this figure is a triangle, then it has three sides. There are no exceptions; everyone should come to this conclusion. Laws of physics are descriptive generalizations. They merely inform us about the way things are; they do not exhort us about how something ought to be. As descriptions of the way things usually occur, they admit of exceptions. A miracle is an exception. As such it does not contradict the general law. The comparison between physical laws and laws of thought is invalid.

Further, God did not create laws of logic. They manifest his uncreated nature. God is rational, and there are certain basic principles of rationality that cannot change any more than God can change his own essential nature. The laws of physics are not so. Presumably, God could have created other kinds of worlds, with other kinds of laws. The law of gravity, for example, applies in a material universe. It does not apply to angels with no physical bodies.

Logic and the Mysteries of Faith. Some object that the great Christian mysteries, such as the Trinity, the incarnation (*see* CHRIST, DEITY OF), and predestination (*see* DETERMINISM ; FREE WILL), violate laws of human reason. There is a difference between propositions that go *beyond* reason, such as mysteries of the faith, and those that go *against* reason. Those that go beyond human ability to reason do not go against reason. Human understanding unaided by special revelation cannot reach them. They can only be known by special revelation. Once these truths are known, their premises do not contradict other revealed truth.

Logic and the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity affirms three persons in one Essence. It does not claim that there are three persons in one Person or three essences in one Essence. These would be logical contradictions.

Logic and the Incarnation. The Incarnation does not claim that God became human. The Infinite cannot become finite, or the Necessary contingent. Rather, it affirms that the second person of the Godhead became man. Jesus assumed a human nature without laying his deity aside. Thus the Incarnation was not the subtraction of deity but the addition of his humanity. Two natures in one person is not a contradiction. Two natures in one nature or two persons in one Person would be, but not two natures sharing one Person. It is a mystery; it is not a contradiction.

Logic and predestination. Neither is predestination and free choice a logical contradiction. It is not contradictory to assert that God has predetermined who will be saved, as long as he predetermined that it would be accomplished through their free choice. What would be contradictory is to claim that God *forced* people to *freely* accept him, since forced freedom is logically incompatible. But to claim that God knowingly determined how he would effect

salvation by his grace and through our free choice is not a logical contradiction. It is a mystery, but not a logical contradiction (see DETERMINISM ; FREE WILL).

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Logical Positivism. Logical positivism is a school of thought that operated during the 1920s within a circle of Vienna philosophers that included Alfred J. Ayer , Rudolf Carnap, Herbert Feigl, and Moritz Schlick. They took an antimetaphysical stand and developed a principle of empirical verification by which all but tautologies and empirical statements were considered meaningless.

This view held devastating implications for Christianity, since neither the existence nor attributes of God could be meaningfully stated. All God-talk was pronounced to be literally nonsense (see ANALOGY, PRINCIPLE OF ; WITTGENSTEIN, LUDWIG). This view is sometimes called acognosticism or semantical atheism .

Roots of the principle of empirical verifiability are found in David Hume 's empirical skepticism. In the last line of his *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* Hume wrote:

When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume—of divinity or school of metaphysics, for instance—let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quality or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion. [Hume, 173]

If Hume is correct, then there are two kinds of meaningful statements: (1) those true by definition (analytic), and (2) those known to be true through the senses (synthetic). Only definitional and sensible sensory statements are meaningful. All the rest are literally nonsense.

In the English-speaking world, Ayer was a zealous proponent of this view. He formulated Hume's conclusion into the principle of empirical verifiability, which stated in its original form that there are only two kinds of meaningful propositions.

Logical positivism died by its own sword (see Feigl). The principle of empirical verifiability is not empirically verifiable. Every attempt to broaden it destroys its effectiveness. Positivism cannot be used to exclude metaphysical statements (see METAPHYSICS).

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Logos Theory. The Greek word *logos* comes from *lego m* ("I say"). *Logos* means "word, speech, explanation, principle, or reason." In Greek philosophy the concept of *logos* had varying meanings. Heraclitus considered it the rational law governing the universe. Anaxagoras saw it as the principle of intelligence in the universe, though he called it *nous* ("mind"), as did Plato . For the stoics the *logos* was the principle of all rationality in the universe. But shortly before the New Testament was written, the Jewish Philosopher Philo (30 B.C.–A.D . 45) described the *logos* as the image of God which was distinct from God and an intermediate between God and the world (Edwards, " *Logos* "). Later, in the third century, Plotinus made the *logos* or *nous* a lower-level emanation from the One (God).

The use of the Logos on a lower level from God led some early Fathers, such as Origen , to assign less than full deity to Christ. This became the basis of Arianism, which was opposed by Athanasius (see CHRIST, DEITY OF). Some scholars have assumed that John's Gospel (1:1) borrowed from this Greek usage of *logos* and, hence, did not teach the full deity of Christ.

There is no reason, however, to suppose John is depicting something inferior to God in the *logos* . John declares clearly and emphatically that "the *Logos* was God" (John 1:1 ; see also 8:58 ; 10:30 ; 20:28). John's concept of the *Logos* is of a personal being (Christ), whereas the Greeks thought of it as an impersonal rational principle. The *Logos* is referred to by personal pronouns, such as *he* (1:1) and *his* (1:14). This was not true of the Greek *logos* .

According to John, the *Logos* "became flesh" (1:14). To combine *logos* (reason) or *nous* (mind) and flesh was contrary to Greek thought. Flesh was either evil, as in Gnosticism , or nearly evil, as in Platonic, or Plotinian (see PLOTINUS) thought. Only in the Judeo-Christian

tradition was matter or flesh thought respectable in any sense. Christians saw it as so good as to be worthy of clothing God in the incarnation.

The Old Testament, not Greek ideas, is the root of New Testament ideas. John, as all New Testament writers (except maybe Luke) were Jews. The root of their thought was in Judaism. They cite the Old Testament hundreds of times. Hence, it is contrary to the Jewish background and thought of the New Testament writers to use Greek sources for their theological ideas.

The New Testament is a theistic (*see* THEISM) book, whereas Greek thought was polytheistic and pantheistic (*see* PANTHEISM). We would not expect John to borrow from such a worldview to express his ideas. The Old Testament spoke of the coming Messiah who was God (Ps. 110:1 ; Isa. 9:6 ; 45:6 ; Zech. 12:10), who would come in human flesh, suffer, and rise physically from the dead (cf. Isaiah 53). Never did Greek religion or philosophy teach this doctrine. Claims that Christianity borrowed from pagan idea or gods are unsubstantiated (*see* MITHRAISM ; RESURRECTION CLAIMS IN NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS)

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Luke, Alleged Errors in. Luke has been charged by the critics with containing significant historical inaccuracies in the nativity narrative of chapter 2 .

The Worldwide Census. Luke 2:1–3 refers to a worldwide census under Caesar Augustus when Quirinius was governor of Syria. However, according to the annals of ancient history, no such census took place. In fact, Quirinius did not become governor in Syria until A.D. 6. It was commonly held by critics that Luke erred in his assertion about a registration under Caesar Augustus, and that the census actually took place in A.D. 6 or 7 (which is mentioned by Luke in Gamaliel’s speech recorded in Acts 5:37).

A Possible Retranslation. F. F. Bruce offers another possibility. The Greek of Luke 2:2 can be translated: “This enrollment (census) was before that made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.” In this case, the Greek word translated “first” (*prot m os*) is translated as a comparative,

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“before.” Because of the construction of the sentence, this is not an unlikely reading. In this case there is no problem, since that census of A.D. 6 is well known to historians.

Recent Archaeological Support. The lack of any extrabiblical support led some to claim this an error. However, with recent scholarship, it is now widely admitted that there was in fact an earlier registration, as Luke records.

William Ramsay discovered several inscriptions that indicated that Quirinius was governor of Syria on two occasions, the first time several years prior to A.D. 6. According to the very papers that recorded the censuses, (see Ramsay, *Was Christ?*) there was in fact a census between 10 and 5 B.C. . Periodic registrations took place every fourteen years. Because of this regular pattern of census taking, any such action was regarded as the general policy of Augustus, even though a local census may have been instigated by a local governor. Therefore, Luke recognizes the census as stemming from the decree of Augustus.

Since the people of a subjugated land were compelled to take an oath of allegiance to the Emperor, it was not unusual for the Emperor to require an imperial census as an expression of this allegiance and a means of enlisting men for military service, or, as was probably true in this case, in preparation to levy taxes. Because of the strained relations between Herod and Augustus in the later years of Herod’s reign, as the Jewish historian Josephus reports, it is understandable that Augustus would begin to treat Herod’s domain as a subject land, and consequently would impose such a census in order to maintain control of Herod and the people.

Third, a census was a massive project which probably took several years to complete. Such a census for the purpose of taxation begun in Gaul between 10–9 B.C. . took 40 years to complete. Likely the decree to begin the census, in 8 or 7 B.C. ., may not have begun in Palestine until sometime later. Problems of organization and preparation may have delayed the actual census until 5 B.C. . or even later.

Fourth, it was not an unusual requirement that people return to the place of their origin, or to the place where they owned property. A decree of C. Vibius Mazimus in A.D. 104 required all those absent from their home towns to return for a census. Jews were quite used to travel, making annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

There is simply no reason to suspect Luke’s statement regarding the census. Luke’s account fits the regular pattern of census taking, and its date would not be unreasonable. This may have been simply a local census taken as a result of the general policy of Augustus. Luke simply provides a reliable historical record of an event not otherwise recorded. Luke has proven himself an amazingly reliable historian (*see* ACTS, HISTORICITY OF ; see Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*). There is no reason to doubt him here.

Quirinius’ Terms as Governor. Given Luke’s statement that the census decreed by Augustus was the first one taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria, the fact that Quirinius became governor of Syria long after the death of Herod, in about 6 A.D. ., sounds like an error in the Gospel.

As noted, there is an alternate way to translate this verse which resolves the problem. Further, there is now evidence that Quirinius was governor of Syria on an earlier occasion that would fit with the time of Christ's birth.

Quintilius Varus was governor of Syria from about 7 to about 4 B.C. . Varus was not a trustworthy leader, a fact demonstrated in A.D. 9 when he lost three legions of soldiers in the Teutoburger forest in Germany. Quirinius, on the other hand, was a noted military leader who squelched the rebellion of the Homonadensians in Asia Minor. When it came time to begin the census, in about 8 or 7 B.C. ., Augustus entrusted Quirinius with the delicate problem in the volatile area of Palestine, effectively superseding Varus by appointing Quirinius to a place of special authority in this matter.

Quirinius was probably governor of Syria on two separate occasions, once while prosecuting the military action against the Homonadensians between 12 and 2 B.C. ., and later, beginning about A.D. 6. A Latin inscription discovered in 1764 has been interpreted to the effect that Quirinius was governor of Syria on two occasions.

Gary Habermas summarizes the situation well:

(1) A taxation-census was a fairly common procedure in the Roman Empire and it did occur in Judea, in particular. (2) Persons were required to return to their home city in order to fulfill the requirements of the process. (3) These procedures were apparently employed during the reign of Augustus (37 B.C. -14 A.D. .), placing it well within the general time frame of Jesus' birth. (4) The date of the specific taxation recounted by Luke could very possibly have been 6-5 B.C. ., which would also be of service in attempting to find a more exact date for Jesus' birth. [*Verdict of History*, 153]

Conclusion. There are three reasons to believe Luke is accurate in his account of Jesus' birth. First, there is the general rule of "innocent until proven guilty." A document from antiquity in proper custody that purports to be giving an accurate account (cf. Luke 1:1-4) should be accepted as authentic until it is proven not to be. This is known as the *ancient document rule* . This rule is used in law courts to establish authenticity of old documents.

Second, there are, as noted, plausible explanations that harmonize the record with historical evidence (*see also* ACTS, HISTORICITY OF).

Third, Luke has proven himself to be a reliable historian even in the details. William Ramsay spent twenty years of research in the area Luke wrote about. His conclusion was that in references to thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine islands Luke made no mistakes! That is a record to be envied by historians of any era.

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Luther, Martin. Martin Luther (1483-1546), the great German Reformer who was not known as an apologist—he was too preoccupied with reconstructing the church. However, he said nothing, properly understood, that would negate the consistent use of reason by the classical apologists in defending the faith.

Reason Condemned. Luther declared that human reason is that God-given faculty by which humans are distinguished from brute beasts (*disputatio de homine*). Luther was concerned that human reason not be substituted for the Gospel, as were the other great teachers of the Church. *The Augsburg Confession* (Art. 2) condemns the belief that anyone can be justified "by his own strength and reason." Martin Chemnitz added, "reason of itself and from events cannot establish anything concerning the love of God toward us" (Chemnitz, 609). These deprecating statements about human reason must be seen in proper context (*see* FAITH AND REASON).

First, they were made in the context of someone trying to attain salvation by personal strength, rather than by the merit of Christ and grace through faith. Human reason cannot attain salvation. Only the Gospel brings salvation. However, this is not to say that reason cannot be used to defend the Gospel. Second, Luther believed the redemptive love of God cannot be established by reason (*see* COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT). Indeed, among the great classical apologists was Augustine , Luther's philosophical and theological mentor.

Reason in Lutheran Theology. While Luther himself, preoccupied as he was with salvation, developed neither an apologetic nor a systematic theology, his colleague, Philipp Melancthon, did both. Melancthon and other Lutheran Reformers used classical apologetics to develop proofs for the existence of God. Chemnitz speaks of the validity of teachings derived from Scripture "by way of good, certain, firm and clear reasoning" (*ibid.*, 249). Luther's own polemics are tightly constructed of cogently reasoned arguments.

Reason, of course, can be the "tool of the devil" when used in opposition to God. But the stand on Scripture by the Lutheran Reformers and modern Lutheran scholars reveals a tradition of reasoned theology and apologetics. One modern exemplar of the Lutheran tradition is John Warwick Montgomery in his works defending the faith. See those noted among the sources for this article.

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Lying in Scripture. The Scriptures teach that God is truth (Deut. 32:4) and that it is impossible for him to lie (Heb. 6:18). God commands us not to lie (Exod. 20:16) and warns that he will severely punish liars (Rev. 21:8). However, there are many instances where God appears to bless lying. Bible critics frequently point out this seeming contradiction.

It is notable that this problem does not exist for divine voluntarists who believe that an act is good or evil only because God wills it to be such. However, according to essentialism (*see* ESSENTIALISM, DIVINE), God is essentially good and cannot do or will evil (*see* GOD, NATURE OF). In this context, the problem of divinely approved lying is acute.

Categories of Alleged Lying. The “lying passages” in the Bible do not all fall into the same category. Some are actual lies, and some are not. Some are approved by God, and some are not. But in no case does the Bible ever place divine approval on a lie as such.

Lies Reported without Approval. Actual lies are recorded in the Bible, but they are not thereby approved. The Bible relates many sins on which it places no approbation. For example, some of Satan’s lies are recorded in Scripture. Satan told Eve, “You will not surely die” (Gen. 3:4) when God had said emphatically that they would (Gen. 2:17). This is a clear case of a lie that God does not approve. Many scholars place Rahab’s lie (see below) in this category. If so, she was blessed *in spite of* her lie and not *because of* it.

Partial Truths That Are Not Lies. Not all partial truths are lies. In at least one case God himself told Samuel to tell only part of the truth to Saul (1 Sam. 16:1–5). Since Samuel feared for his life at the hands of King Saul when God told the prophet to anoint a new king, God instructed him to tell Saul that he had come to offer a sacrifice, which was true but a subterfuge.

Lies Approved in View of a Higher Law. Some conservative Bible scholars and Christian ethicists believe that, while lying *as such* is always wrong, lying to save a life is not. This, they argue, is based on a hierarchy or gradation of values wherein mercy (in saving a life) takes precedence over the truth that ends in murder. The Hebrew midwives in Exodus 1 appear to fall into this category, and perhaps Rahab, who lied to save the lives of the Hebrew spies.

Passages Involving Apparent Lying. Several key passages involving alleged lying with divine approval bear scrutiny. Among these is the case of Abraham’s “half-truth” about his wife Sarah, who was also his half-sister.

Genesis 12:10–20. Fearing that the king of Egypt might kill him and take his wife (but under no direct threat), Abraham instructed Sarah: “Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well

for your sake and my life will be spared because of you” (Gen. 12:13). Sarah was Abraham’s half-sister. Nevertheless, what Abraham instructed Sarah to do was to lie.

No divine approval of Abraham’s act is shown; the opposite is implied. Abraham’s increase in wealth should not be viewed as a divine reward for his lie. Pharaoh’s gifts were understandable. Pharaoh may have felt obligated to pay amends for the wicked constraint that his corrupt society put on strangers who visited his land, as well as for unwittingly taking Abraham’s wife into his palace. Adultery was strictly forbidden by Egyptian religion.

The years of trouble that followed may have been a direct result of Abraham’s lack of faith in God’s protecting power. Although some people are portrayed as men of God, they are still fallible and responsible for their sin, as was David in his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband (2 Samuel 12). God blessed such leaders *in spite of*, not *because of*, their sins.

Genesis 31. Genesis 31:35 records Rachel’s apparent lie about the idols she had stolen. Yet God appeared to bless Rachel, for she was not discovered and God prospered her and her husband Jacob. However, a closer look at this text reveals that God did not bless Rachel for stealing the idols or for lying about her deed. Simply because Laban did not discover that Rachel was the thief does not mean that God blessed her. It is reasonable to assume that God did not expose Rachel’s theft in order to protect Jacob’s life (cf. 31:31). The biblical record reveals that God allowed Rachel to fall into the background of importance until her painful death (Gen. 35:16–20).

Joshua 2:4–5. When the Hebrew spies came to Jericho, they sought refuge in the house of Rahab. When the king of Jericho commanded Rahab to bring out the men, she said that the men had already gone and that she did not know where they were. When Israel destroyed Jericho, Rahab and all her family were saved alive as a reward for her protection. How could God bless Rahab for lying?

Defenders of the biblical text fall into two groups on this issue. Some argue that it is not clear that God blessed Rahab for lying. What he blessed her for was her “faith” (Heb. 11:31), not her falsehood. God blessed Rahab *in spite of* her lie, not *because of* it. Proponents of this view insist that God saved and blessed Rahab for protecting the spies and assisting in the overthrow of Jericho. They insist that nowhere does the Bible explicitly say that God blessed Rahab for lying.

Other scholars insist that Rahab was faced with a real moral dilemma. It may have been impossible for her both to save the spies and to tell the truth to the soldiers of the king. If so, God would not hold Rahab responsible (see Geisler, chap. 7). Certainly a person cannot be held responsible for disobeying a lesser law in order to keep a higher obligation. The Bible commands obedience to the government (Rom. 13:1 ; Titus 3:1 ; 1 Peter 2:13), but civil disobedience is just when the government attempts to compel unrighteousness (Exodus 5 ; Dan. 3, 6 ; Revelation 13). The case of the Hebrew midwives (Exodus 1), who lied to save the lives of the male children, is perhaps the clearest example.

1 Samuel 16:1–5. We have seen that Abraham was judged for telling the half truth that Sarah was his sister, but in 1 Samuel 16 God actually encourages Samuel to tell that he had come to

Bethlehem to offer a sacrifice, when he had also come to anoint David king as well. Did not God encourage deception here? Why did God condemn Abraham for the same thing he commanded Samuel to do?

It is important to note that the two situations are not the same. Abraham's "half-truth" was a whole lie, for the implied question was "Is Sarah your wife?" And his answer in effect was "No, she is my sister." By this answer Abraham intentionally misrepresented the facts, which is a lie.

Samuel was asked, "Why have you come to Bethlehem?" His answer was, "I have come to sacrifice to the Lord" (1 Sam. 16:2). This corresponded with the facts, namely, it was why he came and what he did. The fact that he had another purpose for coming is not directly related to the question he was asked and the answer he gave, as it was in Abraham's case. Of course, had Samuel been asked "Do you have any other purpose for coming?" then he would have had to come clean. "No" would have been a deception.

Concealment and deception are not necessarily the same. Samuel certainly concealed one of the purposes of his mission in order to save his life (1 Sam. 16:2). It is not always necessary (even possible) to tell all in order to tell the truth. The fact that God told Samuel to conceal one of the purposes of his visit in order to avoid Saul's murderous anger does not mean he was guilty of lying. Not telling part of the truth and telling a falsehood are not necessarily the same. Nor are secrecy and concealment the same as duplicity and falsehood.

2 Kings 6:19 . When Elisha went out to meet his enemies, he told them "this is not the way, nor is this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek" (*2 Kings 6:19*). How could a man of God lie to these Syrian troops?

Very simply, what Elisha told them was not actually a lie. The Syrian troops were sent to Dothan in order to capture Elisha. The Lord blinded them, and Elisha came out of the city to meet them. What Elisha told them was "this is not the way, nor is this the city." Once Elisha came out of the city, he was no longer in Dothan. Consequently, entering Dothan was no longer the way to capture Elisha, neither was it the city. Elisha also instructed them, "follow me and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." This was also true. Elisha went before them into Samaria, and when they arrived, the Lord opened their eyes and they saw Elisha, and that they were in Samaria.

2 Chronicles 18:18–22 . God is portrayed in this passage by Micaiah the prophet as enlisting lying spirits to entice wicked King Ahab to seal his own doom. The text says, "The Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of these prophets of yours" (vs. 22). But how can the God of all truth perpetrate such a lie?

Defenders urge that God is not promoting evil here but simply controlling evil for good. Several factors help in understanding this situation. First, this is a vision, a dramatic picture of God's sovereign authority spelled out in regal imagery.

Second, this dramatic vision represents God's sweeping authority, even over evil spirits. The God of the Bible, in contrast to some pagan religions, is in sovereign control of everything, including evil, which he uses to accomplish his good purposes (cf. Job 1–3).

Third, the Bible sometimes speaks of God "hardening" people's hearts (see Rom. 9:17–18) or even sending them strong delusions (2 Thess. 2:11). However, on closer examination, we discover that God did this to those who had hardened their own hearts (Exod. 8:15) and who "did not believe the truth" (2 Thess. 2:12). God uses even their depravity to accomplish his purposes. God *permits* lying as a judgment on evil.

God, for his own purposes of justice, allowed Ahab to be deceived by evil spirits to accomplish his sovereign and good will.

John 7:3–10 . Bible critics have sometimes appealed to this text to show that Jesus lied. This is a serious charge, since it would not only be a divinely approved lie, but one told by God himself in the person of his Son. Jesus' unbelieving brothers challenged him to go up to Jerusalem and show himself openly to be the Messiah (7:3–4). Jesus refused, saying, "I am not yet going up to this feast, because for me the right time has not yet come" (vs. 8). But later Jesus did go (vs. 10). Jesus did not go openly, as the brothers had suggested, nor at the immediate time they suggested. Further, *John 7:8* relates that Jesus said he was not *yet* going. "He remained in Galilee" before he went up.

Luke 24:28 . When Jesus has finished his discourse to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, "Jesus acted as if he were going farther" (Luke 24:28b). Although this is not a verbal lie, it is true that one can lie by actions. Some critics believe that this is what Jesus did here.

Calling this a lie stretches the imagination. The text goes on to say, "But they urged him strongly, 'Stay with us, for it is nearly evening.' So he went in to stay with them" (vs. 29). In other words, Jesus was going on until they persuaded him to stay with them. Rather than impose himself on his disciples, he waited for them to take the initiative, which evidently came immediately and vigorously. By showing that he could go on, he invited these hurting friends to come closer.

Exodus 1:15 . Most alleged cases of divinely approved lying turn out to be either not a lie or not divinely approved. There is at least one case, however, that seems to be both.

The pharaoh (king) of Egypt directly ordered the Hebrew midwives to murder the newborn Hebrew boys. "The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live" (Exod. 1:17). Not only did the midwives disobey pharaoh, but, when he questioned them about their actions, they lied saying, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive" (Exod. 1:19). "So God was kind to the midwives," according to 1:20–21 . "And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own."

There is little question that the midwives both disobeyed a command of government by not murdering the newborn male children and lied to cover it up. The moral dilemma in which the

midwives found themselves was unavoidable. Either they obeyed God's law not to murder, or they obeyed the lesser obligation to pharaoh. Rather than commit deliberate infanticide against the children of their own people, the midwives disobeyed the king. God commands us to obey the governmental powers, but he also commands us not to murder (Exod. 20:13).

The saving of innocent lives is a higher obligation than obedience to government. When the government commands an act against God, we should not obey. God would have held the midwives responsible had they fulfilled their duty to government. In the case of the midwives, the higher law was the preservation of the lives of the newborn male children (cf. Acts 4 ; Revelation 13). Further, the lie, and the larger act of disobedience, came in the context of the midwives' faith commitment to God. The midwives had to make a choice of allegiance and obedience, a choice that required courage and spiritual wisdom. A similar situation might involve obedience to parental authority. Submission is part of the moral authority. But if a parent commands a child to kill or worship an idol, the child must submit instead to the higher authority and refuse. Jesus emphasized the need to follow the higher moral law when he said, "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37a).

The midwives' fear of God led them to do what was necessary to save lives. Their false statement to Pharaoh was an essential part of their effort to save lives.

Conclusion. Narrative texts in which a person lies fall into one of a few categories: First, some cases were not lies but only legitimate utterance of part of the truth. Second, in most cases of clear lying, there is no indication that God approved of the falsehood. To the contrary there was usually some kind of judgment. In cases that can legitimately be called divinely approved falsification, such as the midwives in Exodus 1 , there is unavoidable conflict with a higher moral law. It is when there is a rare, *unavoidable* conflict with one of God's higher moral laws that he suspends our duty to truth.

Sources

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